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ABSTRACT

Permanent further education means "that organized learning is extended to cover later stages in life, and that the attitude towards education changes considerably." Further education comprises further vocational training, retraining at other educational establishments, and adult education. It supplements the traditional courses of education, and continues these under post-school study conditions. At the same time, it endeavors to relieve the educational system of the social pressure resulting from unfulfilled educational needs and requirements. The objectives, content, priorities, and comprehensive sector of further education are discussed. (For related documents see AC 014 024.) (Author/DB)

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Chapter II, Section 2

"Permanent Further Education"

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2. Permanent Further Education

2.1 Further Education - A Principle

In the future, school education and vocational training will, for an ever-increasing number of people, constitute merely the first phase in the education acquired by them during their lives. Even now there are signs that the education acquired during this first phase is not adequate to meet the challenges presenting themselves later on to the individual, even where it is both intensive, broad-based and designed to meet anticipated requirements. The individual who would confine himself to the gaining of experience acquired sporadically and which he often fails to consciously analyse, would not be able to keep pace with the present development. An increasing number of people must acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities by way of organized further learning, in order to satisfy the growing and changing demands made on them in their professions and vocations, and by society.

The term "permanent further education" means i.a. that organized learning is extended to cover later stages in life, and that the attitude towards education changes considerably. The traditional idea of two phases in life, which coincide solely and independently of each other with the acquisition or later application of education, is being replaced by the opinion that organized learning cannot be restricted to a phase devoted to education during the early years of one's life. Further education should, however, always be understood merely as a principle for orientation. It is by no means intended that learning should assume such importance as to constitute the ruling interest - the be-all and end-all - in life.

It is necessary that institutionalized further education be established as a supplementary and comprehensive sector of education following that period of learning spent in school. Further education as the continuation or recommencement of earlier organized learning, and the pre-school and school processes of learning together constitute a coherent whole.

Further education comprises further vocational training, re-training at other educational establishments, and adult education. It supplements the traditional courses of education, and continues these under post-school study conditions. At the same time, it endeavours to relieve the education system of the social pressure resulting from unfulfilled educational needs and requirements.

2.2 The chronological pattern of learning

There is more to the purpose of further education than the prevention of the loss of previously acquired knowledge, skills and abilities. If the entire efforts made with regard to education are sensibly planned, this will facilitate learning which is oriented both to the level of scientific and technical development and to the particular circumstances in life at any given time. Such processes of learning make better use of learning ability, result in greater learning achievements and enable students to acquire higher qualifications. The effectiveness of processes of learning within the framework of further education is also based on the motivation to learn which springs from the experience gained in life. When the curricula for the first phase of education are coordinated with those for further education, the result will be a distribution of efforts in the field of education which will relieve the burdens placed on institutions of higher education and Secondary Stage II (Sekundarstufe II). In some cases, the period of training may possibly be reduced as a consequence of the wise distribution of such efforts.

Technical progress is constantly changing that which is of importance for the individual where knowledge and skills are concerned. This change is reflected in that knowledge gained earlier is superseded and that new knowledge and methods emerge. It is therefore in keeping with this fact that an increasing proportion of the entire efforts made with regard to education during the lifetime of the individual is devoted to further education.

Further education cannot restrict or reduce itself to imparting new knowledge parallel to technical progress. Its aim is rather that of enabling man to participate and cooperate consciously in the development and reshaping processes in all sectors of life, and in so doing to help him develop his personality.

2.) The objectives of further education

To the extent that further education is connected with economic and technical requirements, it aids the individual to fulfil the varying tasks devolving on him in his occupation and social life. As a result, he reacts more freely to pressures to which he would have been more strongly subjected without his individual versatility. Such mobility is based on general abilities such as the ability for abstract thinking, communicating and learning, readiness to cooperate, sensibility and imagination. These abilities are not exhausted by the requirements of the particular place of work or of another limited sector of the human range of activities. They provide the individual with qualifications exceeding valid requirements and expectations, and permit him to make the most of the possibilities of choice and development presented to him in all sectors of life, thereby increasing his independence.

With these objectives, further education achieves more than the one-sided promotion of adjustment to the results of scientific and technical development. It can promote abilities, approaches and behaviour facilitating conscious participation in coming to grips with the consequences of scientific and technical progress.

3.) The content of further education

Further education covers all sectors of life. The different elements of further education oriented to these sectors, further vocational training, re-training and other education courses for adults tend to become narrow and independent units. From the point of view of learning processes and objectives, however, they are to be regarded as a coherent complex, as one whole. Priorities can, however, be established, and objectives raising varying problems concerning curricula and which cannot always be easily formalized, can be identified.

Further education cannot be partitioned off into autonomous spheres of education for leisure time and working hours. It is tied to the connection between these worlds, and can also not ignore this connection when, owing to the tendency to reduce working hours and therefore to increase leisure time, employment as such is given different weight.

The list of subjects covered by further education ranges from practical questions concerning the necessities of everyday life to religious matters. Further education embraces both a further vocational training, which is primarily vocation-oriented, and retraining, and also the expansion of basic education - which is not primarily oriented to vocations - and civics. In particular, further education must be directed to those sectors of life and fields in which there exists an obvious incongruity between the actual level of education and that which is both possible and required. The task of further education in this respect is, among other things, to remedy the present lack of instruction and information. The problems of certain groups, e.g. parents and the elderly, merit special attention. Further education is confronted by additional tasks i.a. in the fields of health, sport and the consumption of goods, etc. This is where education requirements - which to some extent have not even been sufficiently recognized and formulated - are frequently only met to an inadequate degree.

2.5 Priorities under further education

The demands made on the abilities and skills of those gainfully employed change as a result of technical developments. At the same time, scientific and technical progress and economic growth together make for an expected increased need for better qualifications. All this involves certain consequences for those gainfully employed.

Endeavours with regard to further vocational training must attempt to overcome the discrepancy between new challenges encountered at the place of work and the actual qualifications of the employed. This continued adjustment of the individual level of qualifications serves to prevent employed persons losing their place on the vocational and social ladder. The acquisition of additional qualifications facilitates a change of occupation and also promotion. In practice,

it will not be possible to distinguish clearly between the continued possession of qualifications acquired in the past on the one hand, and the acquisition of additional qualifications and the raising of the level of qualifications on the other hand.

Whereas further vocational training takes place within a particular occupation and builds on knowledge, skills and abilities already acquired, retraining denotes the change of occupation required by deep-reaching structural changes, involving the mastery of a new type of work. Since retraining has developed under an education system which does not consistently include further education, it is oriented to the process of initial training for young people. The subjects covered by, and the importance of, retraining will change as a result of the institutionalization and extension of further education. The processes of learning for retraining, too, must not be confined to the imparting of occupational skills, but must also enable students to widen their individual intellectual horizons.

The timely acquisition of additional qualifications can help to prevent the necessity for retraining, or make the process of undergoing retraining easier for the individual concerned. In inevitable cases involving the regrouping of people in other sectors to those in which they formerly worked, retraining problems must be solved by further education without social discrimination.

Basic education can constitute a prerequisite and condition for forms of occupational activity. The underlying idea is that all kinds of further education require an appropriate level of basic education on the part of the student. In so far, the extension of basic education is an accompanying and supplementing factor in all the endeavours made with regard to further education. At the same time, this element of further education denotes the possibility of acquiring the qualifications which can be earned at lower levels of education, in order to be able to fulfil the entry requirements for other courses of further education. The assistance provided under further education for the "second route to receiving learning at a higher educational level" also falls under the extension of basic education.

Civics is an indispensable element of further education and is not to be regarded as an isolated subject or separate discipline. By attempting to make clear the political significance of the respective subjects being learnt in each case, civics can help to make students aware of the interlocking of sectors of life, and to provide them with possible solutions for the conflicts arising in these sectors. The combination of civics with the various other elements of further education does not exclude the urgency of developing and carrying out special programmes for this subject.

Owing to the fact that the individual's profession or vocation is closely linked with his role in life, further education which is primarily vocation-oriented has a key role in the distribution of social opportunities and expectations in life. The steady increase in vocational demands, and readiness to adapt, require that specialized qualifications be supplemented by general qualifications. These are not only important in one's profession or vocation, nor are they exclusively the intended side-products of vocation-oriented processes of learning, but also the goal of all those study courses under further education which are not primarily vocation-oriented. As far as further education which is primarily vocation-oriented is concerned, a decisive factor is the development of curricula which keep to the double objective of providing both specialized and general qualifications.

Tensions between changed requirements and the actual level of education make themselves apparent in different ways. In the field of vocational activities they are more quickly and more keenly felt, and can force the provision of appropriate educational opportunities. In other sectors of life, however, education requirements often do not become so apparent. When this happens, the standard of education easily drops below a possible and required level of development.

In general, no standards of efficiency and appropriate certificates are required for those teaching syllabuses and subjects which are difficult to formalize. Education requirements outside the scope of the individual's vocational sphere are therefore often easily underestimated.

The orientation of further education to processes of learning on the whole and to appropriate training in order to be able to learn, and the endeavours to fit study objectives into a more general framework all counteract confinement to fields and syllabuses in which the gaining of achievements is the sole aim, and also make room for those subjects which are less formalized. At the same time, the necessity arises for giving consideration not only to those education requirements of which the individual is aware, but also to those which are of social importance. This includes the handling of the following questions: information and communication facilities, aesthetics and hygiene, problems of religion and philosophy.

It can be seen from the relation of further education to the key group of those entitled to education, namely, to parents, to what a great extent further education is interwoven into the overall education system and how greatly it can also contribute to a change in education conditions.

The traditional methods of education have been shaken since psychological and psycho-analytical knowledge has begun to penetrate the consciousness of the general public. New points of view and traditional patterns in education stand side by side and create conflict situations. For this reason, the attitude of adults to education is frequently marked by uncertainty. In this situation, there is a need for establishing binding rules in education. The mass media often try to meet the need for binding standards by producing pseudo-scientific programmes intended to increase the knowledge of lay audiences. This is where further education can both instruct and correct.

Thus a close connection is established between further education and the education received in schools. The success of additional education for the family, of making good the lack of education, and of the choice of appropriate schooling for a young person will also require the further education of parents.

The known educational discrepancies between the social strata, sexes, regions and denominations continue in further education. The latter must be more intensively oriented to overcoming these discrepancies. For this purpose curricula must be developed which are adapted to the needs of these groups within the population and which are specially designed to activate the individual's need to further educate himself.

2.6 The comprehensive sector of further education

The distribution of education efforts, the objectives and tasks of further education all provide pointers for fixing the institutional framework: A comprehensive further education sector is to be established within the education system, at the same time incorporating vocation-oriented further education in general processes of learning.

The basic idea of permanent further education, which means keeping pace with developments in all sectors in life and thus facilitates the individual to develop his own abilities, does not permit organized learning to be confined to certain sectors and subjects. The separate treatment of vocation-oriented further education can be no more justified or supported than the isolation of socio-cultural or political subjects in further education. Among the objectives of further education, further education which is primarily vocation-oriented aims at the severance to a considerable extent of the one-sided connection where vocational qualifications are determined by a narrowly demarcated field of work and application. Each study course provided under further education must consider interdisciplinary general aspects in order to give each student an insight, for example, into the correlations between political, economic, social and cultural matters, and to enable him to participate and co-operate accordingly. The acquisition, too, of any one additional specialized qualification must be aimed at producing those general abilities which assist the individual to both analyse and grasp reality. Considered from the aspect of man's overall development, both vocation-oriented and non-vocation-oriented processes of learning must be interlaced and complement each other. As far as that goes, all learning is both useful and expedient, and is to be supported by further education in the interests of developing the individual's personality.

In a comprehensive further education sector, new emphases will be provided to the extent that in each individual sector of learning, the attention of the student is drawn to the question as to what the individual sector means in the context of the whole. In this way, the concepts - to which traditional adult education has been oriented - namely those of the education of the people, intellectual maturity, sporadic education and aid throughout life - are no longer left in isolation.

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